

should be remembered that since the 10th no fatal case had occurred in the hospital, nor, except the one just alluded to, had any shown symptoms of puerperal fever; on the 28th, however, the patient who lay in the bed occupied twelve days previously by the fatal case, showed symptoms of being attacked with peritonitis of a low type; and on the next day the woman who lay in the adjoining bed was similarly affected; both died, the former on the 4th, and the latter on the 5th August. None of the patients in the large ward adjoining were attacked, nor any of those in the other parts of the house. It is remarkable that the first of these patients who was attacked occupied the bed in which the woman that died a fortnight previously had lain, and that the infection originating with her was propagated to her neighbour, though in the interval all the bedding had been washed and aired. I think, therefore, that these two instances, in some degree, confirm the opinion of those who look on puerperal fever, in all its forms, as propagated by infection; and this is further established by the fact, that after these two cases had terminated fatally, the ward being closed, no other case appeared during the remainder of the time that I resided in the hospital, viz. till the beginning of October last. On the other hand, it is remarkable that the first and second cases occurred in very distant parts of the hospital, which fact is opposed to the usual ideas we would hold of infectious contamination. In all these cases the stimulating plan of treatment was that which was adopted.—*Dublin Quarterly Journ.*, Aug. 1855.

48. *Action of Digitalis on the Uterus.*—Mr. W. H. DICKENSON read before the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society, Nov. 27th, a paper on this subject. He commenced by stating that, during the month of October, 1854, a patient in St. George's Hospital, labouring under most severe menorrhagia, was cured by the infusion of digitalis, exhibited for the relief of cardiac affection, from which she also suffered. In consequence of this, he had been induced to try the remedy, by the permission of Dr. Lee, in a series of cases of uterine hemorrhage which had occurred in the hospital. These cases, of which a table was given, were seventeen in number, and the general results of their treatment was as follows: In every case of uterine hemorrhage, unconnected with organic disease, requiring the employment of active remedies, admitted into the hospital after October, 1854, the administration of digitalis was had recourse to as the sole treatment, and the discharge was invariably arrested by it. The time which elapsed before the hemorrhage subsided varied with the dose in which the digitalis was exhibited. When large doses were given, as an ounce to an ounce and a half of the infusion, the discharge never appeared after the second day; when smaller doses, it never continued beyond the fourth day. In uterine hemorrhage connected with organic disease, the remedy acted with less certainty; its exhibition was required for a longer time, and the effect was sometimes transient. The author then spoke of the mode in which the digitalis operated in controlling uterine hemorrhage; and, after concluding that its effect could not depend on the sedative influence of the drug in the heart and arteries, he showed, by various experiments and observations, that the arrest of the hemorrhage was due to the action of the digitalis on the ganglia of the uterus, by which the organ was stimulated and the muscular substance powerfully contracted.—*Lancet*, Dec. 8, 1855.

#### MEDICAL JURISPRUDENCE AND TOXICOLOGY.

49. *Albumen and Hydrated Magnesia as Antidotes in Poisoning with Corrosive Sublimate.*—L. SCHROEDER has performed a number of experiments on dogs and rabbits, with regard to the use of albumen and hydrated magnesia as antidotes in poisoning with corrosive sublimate, from which he arrives at the following results:—

1. Albumen is not to be depended on as an antidote. The albuminate which

is formed is soluble, not only in an excess of albumen, but also in such albuminous substances as may be present in the stomach and intestines, and is especially liable to be taken up by the acids with which it may there meet.

2. Albumen can only be useful when given so as to produce vomiting, or where vomiting is excited by tickling the throat.

3. Hydrated magnesia cannot be regarded as an antidote, as it forms from the corrosive sublimate an oxide of mercury, which is itself poisonous.—*B. and F. Med.-Chirurg. Rev.*, Oct. 1855, from *Deutsche Klinik*, 1854, and *Prager Vierteljahrsschrift*, 1855.

50. *Poisoning by German Sausages*.—Mr. W. H. MICHAEL, of Swansea, relates the following case: On March 22d, 1855, Mr. Michael was desired to see a child living in Postern-lane, Swansea. Upon arriving at the house, he found a fine little boy, between four and five years of age, lying on his grandmother's lap. The mother had been given the evening previously a German sausage, of which the eldest son had partaken at once. This had made him ill through the night; vomiting and purging had taken place to a considerable extent. The little boy now ill had eaten some of the sausage (according to the statement of the mother, only one or two very thin slices) for breakfast, about two or three hours before Mr. Michael arrived, at two o'clock P. M. Shortly afterwards he had vomited. About half an hour before he was seen, convulsions had come on; he had also been violently purged. When seen, the general surface was cold; the limbs rigid; the teeth very firmly clenched; the pupils largely dilated, and insensible to stimulus; and he had occasional convulsive spasm of the lips. The lips were livid; the face was deadly pale; no pulse could be felt at the wrist; and the respirations were only three in the minute. He died in about ten or fifteen minutes, and about three hours after eating the sausage, as nearly as could be learned from the confused statements of the mother.

The remaining portion of the sausage, which was one of the German smoked and dried kind, showed some incipient softening and decomposition (not putrefactive) at the surface; the interior both looked and smelled good. Careful analysis detected no traces of metallic poison. The mouldiness frequently spoken of by authors could not be seen.

The *post-mortem* examination showed the stomach half full of pieces of sausage, floating in a pulpy mass, half digested, of the same. Considerable irritation and mammillation of the mucous coat existed, especially towards the pyloric orifice. The mucous coat of the small intestines was irritated throughout, small puncta of blood being observable over the surface, which was bathed in increased mucous secretion. The brain was congested, as were also the thoracic organs. The other portions of the body (which, although well formed, was much attenuated) were healthy.

In Germany such cases are fearfully prevalent. In Wurtemberg alone, according to official returns, more than four hundred cases have occurred in the past fifty years, of which a hundred and fifty died. Of these, forty per cent. occurred in the month of April; and this has been put down as a matter of some importance in determining the character of the poison, which is said usually to manifest its symptoms in from twenty-four to forty-eight hours after ingestion. Recent researches appear to have proved, contrary to what has long been supposed, that unprepared meats, far advanced in the putrefactive process, or belonging to diseased animals, may be often eaten with impunity. Mr. Michael inclines to the doctrine lately put forth by M. Van der Court, that the poison of sausages may be due to the development of an elementary vegetable—the *sarcina botulina*.—*Ibid.*, *Assoc. Med. Journ.*, Aug. 17, 1855.

51. *Poisonous Nature of Tobacco packed in Lead Cases*.—The *Union Medical* for September, 1854, contains some remarks on this subject. The moisture contained in the tobacco oxidizes the lead, and forms a soluble salt. The tobacco becomes covered with a layer of acetate, carbonate, chloride, and sulphate of lead, amounting to from six to thirty grains in half a pound. Tinfoil has, therefore, in France, been ordered to be used instead of lead. The pro-